

Week Ending Friday, August 8, 2008

The President's Radio Address

August 2, 2008

Good morning. This weekend marks the beginning of August, the month when many Americans take their summer vacation. This year, however, the high price of gas is taking a toll on summer travelers. Congress is now taking a month-long recess of its own. Unfortunately, Democratic leaders are leaving town without taking any action to ease the burden of high gas prices on families across America.

The fundamental source of high gas prices is the fact that supply is not keeping pace with demand. To reduce pressure on prices, we need to increase the supply of oil, especially oil produced here at home. So in June, I called on Congress to lift the legislative ban that prevents offshore exploration of parts of the Outer Continental Shelf, or OCS. But the leaders of the Democratic Congress have refused to allow a vote. Lifting the ban on this offshore exploration would benefit our economy in two important ways.

First, lifting the ban would allow our Nation to take advantage of a large and reliable source of domestic oil. Experts believe that these restricted areas could eventually produce about 18 billion barrels of oil; that's almost 10 years worth of America's current oil production.

Second, lifting the ban would create new opportunities for American workers and businesses. On Tuesday, I visited the Lincoln Electric Company in Cleveland, Ohio, a business that produces welding products used for offshore exploration. If Congress were to permit this exploration, it would mean new jobs at businesses like Lincoln Electric. American drivers are counting on Congress to lift the ban on offshore exploration, and so are American workers.

Bringing these resources on line will take time, and that means that the need for congressional action is urgent. I've lifted the ex-

ecutive restrictions on offshore exploration. This means that the only thing now standing between the American people and these vast oil resources is the United States Congress. The sooner Congress lifts the ban, the sooner we can get this oil from beneath the ocean floor to your gas tank.

We also need to take other essential steps to strengthen domestic oil production. Congress needs to pass legislation that allows us to tap the extraordinary potential of oil shale, permits exploration in currently restricted areas of northern Alaska, and enables the expansion of America's domestic refining capacity.

It appears that the leaders of the Democratically controlled Congress will let the entire summer pass without voting on any of these vital steps to help reduce pressure on gas prices. This failure to act is unacceptable to me and unacceptable to the American people. So when they return from their summer break, Democratic leaders should show that they've heard the frustration of the American people by allowing a vote on offshore exploration. If Congress does not act, they will owe families across America an explanation for why they're ignoring their concerns.

I know that high energy prices are making this a difficult time for many of our citizens, but it is important to remember that these high prices were not inevitable. They are partially the result of policy choices that have been made over the years by the United States Congress. Now Congress has an opportunity to begin reversing that damage. By opening up new resources at home, we can help bring energy costs down, and that will help ensure that our economy remains the strongest, most vibrant, and most hopeful in the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on August 1 in Walkers Point, ME, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 2. The transcript was made

available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to Military Personnel and Their Families at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska

August 4, 2008

The President. Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. I am honored to be with you. No better place to refuel an airplane than right here. I appreciate you all coming out. I'm traveling today with the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush; our daughter Barbara Bush.

I've just got one thing to ask the folks here at Eielson. Iceman Team, ready to go?

Audience members. At 50 below!

The President. Absolutely! I thank the Iceman Team for joining us. I also want to thank the Arctic warriors of Fort Wainwright for being here as well.

You know, I've been to a lot of military bases around the world. I don't think I've ever been to one where a moose can cause a traffic jam or a base where the snowmobile is considered a lawn ornament. *[Laughter]* And for you moms and dads out there, it must be a little strange in the summertime to say to your children, "Make sure you get home before dark." *[Laughter]*

I want to thank General Graper and his wife Melinda for their hospitality, and thank you for your service to our country, General. I want to thank Colonel Tim Jones, U.S. Army garrison commander of Fort Wainwright, and Theresa. I want to thank Colonel Wenke and his wife Wendy from the mighty 168th Air Fueling Wing.

The United States military has had no better supporter and stronger friend than Senator Ted Stevens. Thank you for coming, Senator; thank you for bringing your daughter. Nothing wrong with a father bringing his daughter to an event like this.

I'm also pleased that the Governor of the great State of Alaska, Governor Sarah Palin, and her husband Todd are with us today too.

I first want to say something to our military families. I can't thank you enough for all the

sacrifices you have given. There is no question, we have the finest military in the world, and one reason why is because we've got the finest military families in the world. These have been tough times on our families, and I want to thank you for staying in the fight.

I'm also proud to be here with people who have volunteered in the face of danger. There is no more important mission than to protect the United States from harm. Many of you volunteered after the attacks on the homeland on 9/11/2001. You understand what I know: That it is best to defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here in the United States.

We have been unrelenting in our efforts to protect America, and I want to thank you for your service. There is no finer honor than being the Commander in Chief of a fine group of men and women, and I'm proud to be in your midst.

I want to thank the members of the 354th Fighter Wing. I appreciate what you do; I appreciate your efforts. I want to thank you for keeping us safe on the Nation's western flank. I thank you for your training missions. The people in the lower 48 send their very best.

I want to thank the more than 200 airmen from Eielson who are deployed around the world, many in the Middle East. Their service in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere is making this Nation safer. And for the family members of those airmen, God bless you, and thank you for standing with your loved one.

Eielson is also the home of the "Guardians of the Last Frontier," the men and women of the Alaska Air National Guard 168th Air Refueling Wing. I'm an old Guard pilot myself. I want to thank the pilots who are here, and I thank those who help these planes stay in the air. Your contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are significant and important.

I want to thank the soldiers from Fort Wainwright. I'm proud to be standing with the men and women of Task Force 49 and the mighty Stryker Brigade. You got to know the folks from Task Force 49 are pretty tough; after all, they train in 50 below and they fight in 120 above. *[Laughter]*